



CITY COUNCIL

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII

20-206

No. _____

RESOLUTION

PROCLAIMING THE HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AND TO THE REALIZATION OF EQUITABLE OUTCOMES FOR FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES THROUGH COVID-19 PANDEMIC ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAMS.

WHEREAS, the parallel health and economic crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have amplified pre-existing inequities in the economic, political, and social structures in the City and County of Honolulu ("City"); and

WHEREAS, "frontline communities" are typically defined as communities that are disproportionately exposed and vulnerable to health threats, climate-based disruptions, and economic dislocation and that have fewer resources, capacity, safety nets, or political agency to respond to and withstand those risks; and

WHEREAS, frontline communities often include low-income communities; immigrant and refugee communities including those with undocumented immigrants; Native Hawaiian, Compact of Free Association (more commonly referred to as "COFA"), and Pacific Islander communities; communities of color; people with disabilities; people experiencing houselessness or housing insecurity; the LGBTQ community; as well as women, keiki, kupuna, and anyone at the intersection of these identities; and

WHEREAS, "distributional equity" means programs and policies have resulted in the fair distribution of material and other resources as well as benefits and burdens across all segments of a community prioritizing those with highest need; and

WHEREAS, "structural equity" means that decisions are made with a recognition of the historical, cultural, and institutional dynamics and structures that have routinely served to give advantage to privileged groups in society, which have resulted in chronic cumulative disadvantage to those in frontline communities; and

WHEREAS, Oahu's societal wellbeing is rooted in an island-based, self-sufficient, sustainable economy predicated on the values of social wellbeing, aloha aina, and malama aina; and

WHEREAS, the University of Hawaii at Manoa's report *Do No Harm: How Hawai'i State Government Can Mitigate the COVID-19 Economic Crisis* identified two-thirds of the State's households as financially unstable, and highlighted how the City's economy, built atop historically unequal foundations, was failing its residents even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, despite record-high gross domestic product per capita and record-low unemployment; and



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WHEREAS, the 2020 Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, commonly referred to as "ALICE," report by Aloha United Way ("AUW") highlighted many issues associated with the overreliance of Honolulu's economy on tourism, including the degradation of cultural and natural resources, and the vulnerability of our island economy to shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, in addition, the report also noted that between 2007 and 2018 there was a 29 percent increase in low-wage jobs in Honolulu, jobs which lack long-term security, while the number of high-wage jobs had actually decreased by 28 percent; and

WHEREAS, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, AUW's 2017 and 2020 ALICE reports demonstrated how frontline communities were already more likely than others to be in poverty or in ALICE households; and

WHEREAS, though our entire island community has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, frontline communities that face preexisting socioeconomic and health inequities are arguably the most severely harmed by the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, in its April 22, 2020 report entitled, *Who are Hawaii's Frontline Workers*, the Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, stated that women are at greater risk of exposure to COVID-19 than men, as they compose nearly two-thirds of the State's essential workforce; and

WHEREAS, in May 2020, the Hawaii Journal of Health and Social Welfare stated that Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities have experienced disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 and members of these communities are dying at higher rates than their white counterparts across the nation due to structural inequities in access to health care and economic security; and

WHEREAS, the Black Lives Matter and related movements have recently highlighted how individual, institutional, structural, and systemic racism continue to shape our social, economic, and political structures, including through the disproportionate health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic upon frontline communities; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women, Hawaii Working Families Coalition, Aina Aloha Economic Futures, Uplift Hawaii, and Blue Planet Foundation have all advanced COVID-19 pandemic recovery plans that focus on equity issues, including:

- Centering gender in the pursuit of economic and racial justice through recovery;



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- Investment in social services with high economic multiplier effects, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (commonly known as "SNAP"), childcare, affordable housing programs such as the City's Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Program and other loan programs for low and moderate income homeowners, and workforce development programs such as the City's YouthBuild Honolulu;
- The vulnerability of communities shut out of federal economic aid and other COVID-19 related relief programs;
- The importance of including Native Hawaiian perspectives in the development of a strong, self-sustaining, and circular economy;
- The development of a culturally-grounded regenerative visitor economy;
- The need to engage diverse voices in decision-making processes; and
- The need to ensure equitable access and affordability in our transition to 100 percent clean energy; and

WHEREAS, in an analysis of 118 metropolitan area economies in the United States, Federal Reserve economists indicated that there was a positive correlation between economic growth and high levels of racial inclusion and progress toward income equality, both of which are proxy measures for equity; and .

WHEREAS, a just economic recovery is an opportunity to spur economic growth and redress historical inequities in our City and can elevate frontline communities that have been underrepresented in medium- and high-wage jobs, particularly in the fields of the arts, agriculture, clean energy, transportation, data science, and technology; and

WHEREAS, on June 19, 2020, the Maui County Council adopted Resolution 20-84, proclaiming Maui County's support for an equity-based, feminist COVID-19 pandemic economic recovery plan emphasizing political, economic, and social equality between the sexes; and

WHEREAS, on October 9, 2019, the Honolulu City Council ("Council") adopted Resolution 19-233, establishing the *Ola: Oahu Resilience Strategy* as a guiding policy document that:

- Calls for the centering of the needs of frontline communities as the City continues to work to achieve climate resilience and economic equity; and



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- Specifies that certain actions be taken to increase social equity and ensure equitable access to sustainable transportation and other similar measures by frontline communities; and

WHEREAS, since 2019, the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency ("OCCSR") has had an Equity Program that seeks to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to benefit equitably from City climate policy solutions; and

WHEREAS, the OCCSR also seeks to reduce or eliminate inequitable burdens through the implementation of practices that advance procedural, distributional, structural, inter-generational, and cultural equity while also increasing climate resilience for all City communities; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that there is a critical need for response, recovery, repair, and revitalization to create a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable post-COVID-19 economy for the City; and

WHEREAS, the Council further believes that equity is the correction of broken systems in order to eliminate disparate outcomes based on identity; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that it proclaims its commitment to equity and social justice and to the realization of equitable outcomes for frontline communities through the City's operations and COVID-19 pandemic economic recovery programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council recognizes that our communities are only as strong as our most vulnerable members and that there is need for a post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery plan that specifically helps frontline communities build vibrant and healthy communities and eliminates or mitigates disparities based on race, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, age, or socio-economic status; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council recognizes that it is critical to evaluate the impact that existing and future City policies and practices have on promoting an equitable society and that it is important to consider the best practices of other cities in order to develop human-centered recommendations for action because the well-being of our community increases when all members of our community have the opportunity to achieve their full potential; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council urges all City departments and agencies to employ the above-cited definitions of equity in order to cultivate the



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awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to effectively address equity issues within City government and develop equitable City practices and processes as well as create future equitable policies and programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council urges the newly reorganized Office of Economic Revitalization to consider equity-based programs in its COVID-19 economic recovery work and to include frontline community voices and representation when developing and implementing its policies and programs; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Council requests the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency to use the information garnered through its Equity Program to research and make a recommendation to the Council regarding the establishment of a City Social Justice and Equity Commission, the purpose of which would be to promote proactive policy, decision-making, planning, workplace practices, operations, and services to advance equity and social justice, and report to the Council with its findings within 120 days of the adoption of this resolution; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, the Managing Director, the Executive for Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency, and the Executive Director of the Office of Economic Revitalization.

INTRODUCED BY:

Tony Wata

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

AUG 18 2020

Honolulu, Hawaii

Councilmembers

CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII
CERTIFICATE

RESOLUTION 20-206

Introduced: 08/18/20 By: TOMMY WATERS

Committee: ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
AND REVITALIZATION

Title: RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AND TO THE REALIZATION OF EQUITABLE OUTCOMES FOR FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES THROUGH COVID-19 PANDEMIC ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAMS.

Voting Legend: * = Aye w/Reservations

08/26/20	ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND REVITALIZATION	CR-202 -- RESOLUTION REPORTED OUT COMMITTEE FOR ADOPTION. 4 AYES: FUKUNAGA, KOBAYASHI, MENOR, WATERS. 2 EXCUSED: ELEFANTE, MANAHAN.
09/09/20	COUNCIL	CR-202 AND RESOLUTION 20-206 WERE ADOPTED. 9 AYES: ANDERSON, ELEFANTE, FUKUNAGA, KOBAYASHI, MANAHAN, MENOR, PINE, TSUNEYOSHI, WATERS.

I hereby certify that the above is a true record of action by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu on this RESOLUTION.


GLEN I. TAKANASHI, CITY CLERK


IKAIKA ANDERSON, CHAIR AND PRESIDING OFFICER